



ARMMA

NEWS



LARK Choir and Orchestra Presenting Benjamin Britten's War Requiem

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Predictable! Are We?

Predictable opportunities lead to unpredictable leaps!

By **Zaven Khanjian**, Executive Director/CEO, AMAA

Ever since the United States presidential election of November 2016, one word has nestled in my mind and keeps hammering me.

Predictable!

Are we?

No, this will not bring back memories from a strange and extraordinary election year, truly unlike any I have ever witnessed or experienced over several decades of voting. Most Americans were delighted that the presidential election was over. An election that embraced amusement, drama, pain, surprise, anger and gravity.

Nor does it challenge the Divine authority of the Creator whose will is absolute and the word meaningless. This thought process is at a plateau far below His.

Now that the election is over, we must have a healthy outlook. We all want the best for our nation and its people. We all aspire to do better, be better and make better.

What has encumbered my thoughts and carried forward from the election is the correlation between 'predictable' and 'unpredictable.'

The former has the attributes of reliability as it projects a vision of a tomorrow based on experience and/or knowledge of experience. The vision in the case of the latter is blank, unknown, fearsome and surprising. Its attractiveness hinges on the hope factor, which is part of the unknown. An expectation worthy of the risk.

The selection process relies on the degree of (dis)satisfaction, (non)acceptance and appreciation of the 'predictable' weighed against the degree of the ultimate desire or need for change and the measured level of hope to acquire it.

As I contemplate on the application of the dilemma covered above and on the realities mapping the mission of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, I tend to agree that our past experience has led us to be "faithful to our legacy." A legacy, founded on the Word of God, the sweat of unsung heroes, the vision of a few gallant men, miracle illuminators and an army of graceful, generous yet humble donors. A legacy solidly worthy of qualifying our march forward as 'predictable' while evolving in time, adapting to circumstances, reinventing vision and mapping the road 'embracing a better future.'

As we roll through the AMAA's Centennial celebration and stride toward the goal of our Capital Campaign, we can be rest assured that the joy in realizing dreams and aspirations of

- an orphaned child in Armenia
- a war stricken student in Syria
- a boarding teen in Anjar
- a biology major at Haigazian
- a High School graduate at Avedisian
- a widow of a martyred soldier in Artsakh
- a seminary student at NEST
- a Merdinian Middle School graduate
- a Camper in Shushi or Camp Arev

and thousands more of our brothers and sisters, who are touched by the AMAA on a daily basis, is predictable. What is unpredictable is the limit of their creativity and the bounds of their success and imagination.

I invite you to join our Campaign to realize the unpredictable bounds of our predictable success because predictable opportunities lead to unpredictable leaps.

Thank you for your generous support of our Mission! □





Do We Really Believe the Bible? John 5:31-47

By **Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian**, *Executive Director, Armenian Evangelical World Council*



It is very hard to deal with people who are "holier than thou." Jesus was talking to such a group of men who regarded themselves as the champions of biblical faith. They would stand for it, fight for it, but not truly believe it. He told them, *"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"* (John 5:46-47) Jesus was telling these men that although they regarded themselves as the defenders of biblical truth that they really did not believe the Scriptures at all. He accused them of not believing the Bible because their lives contradicted its basic teachings. Their talk was better than their walk. The lives they lived bore little resemblance to the truth they professed.

People are accustomed to praising the virtue of truthfulness, and they condemn lies and deception. The sad reality is that they usually define these qualities in relationship to others, but rarely deem telling themselves the truth as having a primary importance. The Psalmist tells us that "speaking the truth from the heart" (Psalm 15:2) is one of the foundations of a life of moral and spiritual excellence. Being honest with ourselves is one of the fundamental requirements of religious faith.

Self-deception is a trait common to many people. Often what they do not wish to face, they hide in their subconscious where it remains suppressed, occasionally manifesting itself in behavior which they do not recognize. Speaking the truth from the heart is an indispensable step toward a meaningful healthy spiritual development.

Jesus expected those defenders of biblical truth to demonstrate their faith. He maintained that if they really believed that the Bible was true, they would demonstrate that belief by endeavoring to live their lives in accordance with its basic teachings.

What Jesus expects of His followers today is that what they say must be backed up by what they are; otherwise, it will have an empty and hollow sound. All their preaching and teaching will never reach beyond the four walls of their churches. Edgar Guest expressed the sentiments of the whole wide world when he said, "I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one any day."

People need to learn to internalize and externalize the contents of the Bible. The Bible becomes a meaningful and an inspirational book when its insights and teachings become part of their internal equipment as persons. Moreover, these insights and teachings should become expressed in their actions, their relations with others.

One of the cardinal principles of education is "learning by doing." People learn best by doing, not just by reading. If they want to learn a chemical formula, they don't only read about it in the chemistry textbooks, they go to the lab and experiment with it. Experimentations and applications are important elements in the school of life, which explains Jesus' instruction "Go and do likewise."

The message is self-evident and clear. If we really believe in the value and truth of the Bible, we will act upon it; we will give ourselves to it. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "You can determine what a man believes, not by studying the content of his creed, but by observing the assumptions on which he habitually acts."

Do we really believe the Bible? If we do, it is important to understand what it says and what it means specifically for us. The Letter of James compared the Bible to a mirror (James 1:22). A mirror reveals the appearance of a person who uses it. As we read the Bible, we see ourselves as we are – we can see our faults and foibles, our shortcomings and sins. Moreover, the Bible instructs us as to how we can change our lives by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But, most importantly, it guides and inspires us to apply what we have learned from it.

Application of the biblical truths is so important in our lives, for it is not enough to read the Bible, to understand and preach it but to apply its precepts in our daily life.

A man who was about to make a trip to the Holy Land told one of his acquaintances, "When I get there I expect to climb to the top of Mount Sinai and shout the Ten Commandments." The acquaintance told him, "It would be better for you to stay here and live them."

Yes, when we really believe the Bible we will live according to its precepts and teachings. □

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Alfortville, France

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. Isaiah 43:2



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Alfortville located at 8 Rue Groupe-Manouchian in Alfortville, France, was founded in 1930. In the beginning the worship services were held in a rented room. Soon the Church organized Armenian language classes for children and a Sunday School was opened. Gradually the number of students reached 89, and the programs presented at the Church created great enthusiasm.

In 1964, a sanctuary and a parsonage were built on a plot of land purchased earlier and the dedication service took place in 1965. From 1981-1988, the Church could not hold worship services due to the absence of a pastor. In 1987, the buildings were renovated with the support of the Armenian Missionary



Rev. & Mrs. Gilbert and Léa Léonian.

Association of America and on January 31, 1988 worship services resumed. In addition to worship services, the Church conducted a Sunday School, held activities for the youth, prayer meetings for adults, and Armenian language classes for youth and adults. The Church also organized Evangelistic meetings with participation from guest pastors.

A number of Pastors have served the Church over the years. They include: Der Sahakian (1930-1934), Margos Vekilian (1934-



Alfortville Church after arson attack.

1939), Joseph Barsoumian (1939), Papazian (1943), Karekin Sislian, Margos Vekilian (1965-1967), Yeramian (1975-1985) Joël Mikaélilian (1988-1993), and Alain Bedikian (1993-2003).

From 2003 to 2015, the Church once again remained without a Pastor living at the Church. Pastoral duties were carried out by Joël Mikaélilian from his church in Issy-les-Moulineaux and during 2014 and 2015 he was assisted by Rev. René Léonian.

Rev. Gilbert Léonian and his wife Léa were appointed to the parish on September 1, 2015 and currently they live on the premises. Consolidating the loyal core of members and the regular meetings, they have brought a new dynamism to the witness and dissemination of the Gospel.

Under their leadership, the following events were organized: a day of solidarity with the church in Kessab, which was attended by Rev. Serop Meguerditchian; an informative evening on the situation of the Christians of Aleppo with Rev. Haroutune Selimian; the *Vartanantz* Day celebration; a conference on the Armenian woman with Lucy Sulayan; an evangelization concert



Children and youth of Alfortville Church participate in worship service.

with Gilbert Hovsepian; and a missionary meeting with the Bagdad Minister, Pastor Norek Hovsepian.

There is a large, active and well-organized Armenian community in Alfortville. Also located here are Radio Ayp FM, the Armenian cultural center and the Saint Mesrop-Arabian Bilingual School. Fraternal links are also maintained with the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Brethren C.

On Sunday, April 2, a serious arson attack was perpetrated against the Church premises, threatening the lives of the Pastor and his wife. But in His great mercy, God saved both of them and the building. It was a true miracle. Instead of discouraging them, this ordeal stimulated the faith and witness of the Pastor, his wife, and all the members of the Church. They send you their heartfelt appreciation for your prayers and for all of your expressions of brotherly love.

What a precious gift it is to belong to the great Armenian Evangelical family that has been scattered to the four corners of the earth. □



Palm Sunday.



HOW ARE WE DOING?

Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed survey about the AMAA News which is on the envelope in the middle section of this issue.

We don't just want to meet your expectations, we aim to surpass them. To do that we need to know what you think we're doing right, and more importantly, if there's anything we could do better!

We value your feedback. Your responses will help us maintain the quality of our publication.



Meet Our Veteran Pastors

Rev. Dr. John Markarian Celebrating 100th Birthday



The Rev. Dr. John Markarian was born in Windham, a town in Greene County New York affectionately named “Gem of the Catskills” on June 7, 1917, two months after the US entered into World War I. Dr. Markarian’s father, The Rev. Hagop Markarian, was born in Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul. He attended the missionary-run St. Paul’s Apostolic Institute and was one of eight Armenian men in the inaugural graduating class of 1893. In 1898, he left Turkey and entered the United States, where he enrolled in Lafayette College and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and was awarded the Astronomy Prize and Math Prize at the time of his graduation in 1901. He went on to Princeton Theological Seminary, graduating in 1904 and was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry.

John’s mother, Dora Benedict Euth, traced her American ancestry thru the Benedict Family whose first arrival in the United States was Thomas Benedict in 1638. She was the great-great-great-granddaughter of The Rev. James Benedict, founding Pastor in 1776, of the Pittston Baptist Church in Luzerne County, PA. The Markarian family eventually moved to Scranton, PA where Hagop was the French Professor at Scranton Central High School and stated supply pastor of two Presbyterian Churches, Old Forge and Duryea.

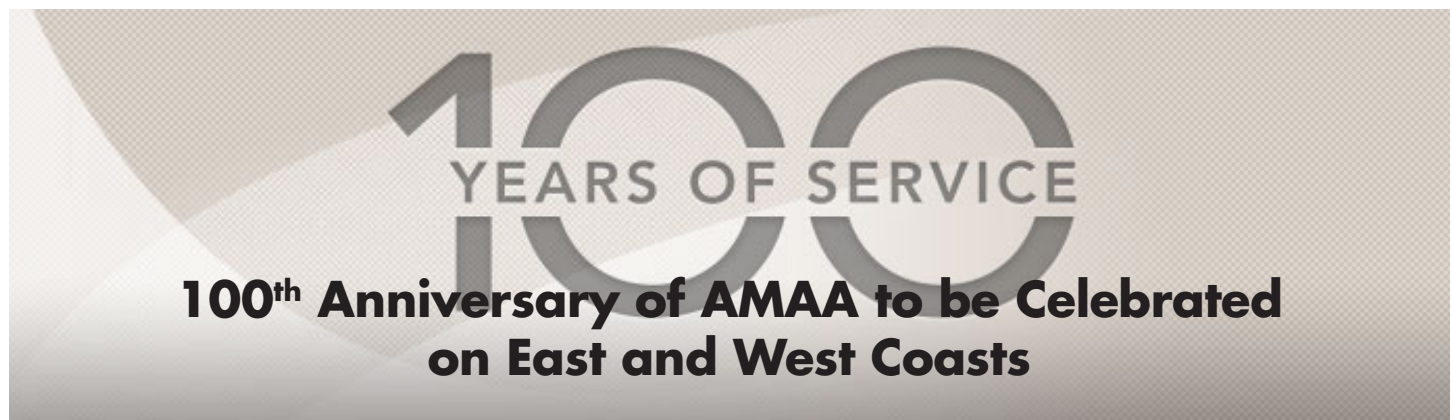
John graduated from Scranton Central HS in the class of 1935. For three years, he was employed as a clerk in S.H. Bezdjian Oriental Rugs in Wilkes-Barre, PA. During that period of time, he attended the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Finance evening classes earning The Diploma after three years of study. In 1938, he was employed as a clerk in the Plant Record and Cost Department of the Scranton Electric Company until 1941 and enrolled in Lafayette College as a pre-theological student. He graduated in 1943 with a BA Degree in Philosophy. During his enrollment in Lafayette, he worked the nightshift in the Payroll Department at Ingersoll Rand Corporation where he met Ruth Miller. They married in 1943, after his graduation, and moved to New Jersey where John enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary and Ruth joined the Gallup Corporation in Princeton. In 1945, John

graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary and was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity Degree. Following in his father’s footsteps, John became an ordained Presbyterian minister in the Lackawanna Presbytery.

In 1946, Dr. Markarian joined the Religion Department at Lafayette College. It was during this time, one of his students, Harry Balukjian, introduced him to the Armenian Community in Philadelphia. In 1955 he took a two year leave of absence from his position at Lafayette to accept an invitation from the Armenian Evangelical Church to organize a church-related college in Beirut, Lebanon, to be named Haigazian. The family of three, his wife Ruth and their 5-year old daughter Joanne, set sail from New York to Beirut on an Egyptian mail line, the SS Mohammed Ali el-Kebir. The completion of Markarian’s dissertation for his Ph.D. in Theology, postponed because of the move to Beirut, was awarded by Drew University Graduate School in Madison, New Jersey in 1963, during a sabbatical for that purpose. This challenging job, the founding and forming of a University college, lasted 11 years until 1966. The family moved to Pella, Iowa, where Dr. Markarian became head of the Religion Department and Dean of the Chapel at Central College, a liberal arts college affiliated with the Reformed Church of America. During this three-year period, Ruth lost her life in a tragic automobile accident. Dr. Markarian eventually returned to Beirut and became Professor of Theology and Director of Development of the Near East School of Theology until 1971, when he returned to the Presidency of Haigazian University College.

In 1973, Dr. Markarian met Inge Wilke, a member of the staff of the German Embassy in Beirut. The two were married in December, 1974, at the Old First Church in Huntington, New York. They spent the years up to 1982 on the door-step of the war in Lebanon. Dr. Markarian retired in 1982 and the two moved to Los Angeles, living there from 1982 – 1986, when they moved to West Pittston where they presently reside. His daughter Joanne lives in Los Angeles, and his grandson, born in 1983 in Los Angeles, now resides in Sydney, Australia.

Dr. Markarian’s memoir, *The Thirsty Enemy*, was published by the AMAA in 2010. □



By Florence Avakian

The Centennial of any organization is an event of great pride and celebration. For the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), it is even more reason to continue its successful, century hammered programs of education, humanitarian work, youth camps, scholarships, and Evangelism.

On October 21, 2017, the AMAA will celebrate its Centennial on the East Coast at its Annual Meeting, followed by a grand Banquet at the Glenpointe Marriott in Teaneck, NJ. The West Coast celebration of the centenary will follow in California in October of 2018.

In a recent interview with AMAA Executive Director and CEO Zaven Khanjian at the AMAA headquarters in Paramus, NJ, he explained that the Centennial celebrations are combined with a fund-raising campaign with the express goal of raising \$20 million in the next two years. The campaign, which began in October of 2016, has raised as of today four and a half million dollars through pledges and donations.

AUSPICIOUS BEGINNINGS

It was a century ago, that the AMAA was created at a church union membership meeting in Worcester, MA. "When the AMAA was founded in 1918, there were more than 100,000 widows and orphans throughout the Middle East. We answered the call to meet their physical, spiritual and educational needs, and we are still answering the call for those in need in 24 countries around the world, including Armenia, Artsakh, the CIS, the Middle East, Europe, Canada, South America, and Australia," Mr. Khanjian revealed.

The AMAA entered Armenia following the 1988 disastrous earthquake through the efforts of Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, the then Executive Director of the Association, with one major program centering on orphans and childcare. Registering in Armenia in 1991, shortly followed by the registration in Artsakh as a humanitarian organization, the AMAA projects grew and developed, now with 1,600 children up to 18 years of age under sponsorship with thousands more in schools, Day Schools, Kindergartens, Sunday Schools and Christmas Joy programs, Mr. Khanjian related.

After 25 years in Armenia and Artsakh, tens of thousands of children have received direct monetary gifts, as well as food, clothing, medical care, day shelter and education. Over time, the AMAA started Day Schools with extracurricular activities and warm meals for children of parents suffering from financial and

other difficulties. These institutions are currently in Shushi, two in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor.

Simultaneously, the now 170-year-old Armenian Evangelical Church, also registered in Armenia. "There is a symbiotic relationship between the AMAA and the Church. The AMAA is the missionary arm of the Church," he explained.

There are currently 100 churches around the world, in five continents, with 31 in North America. The U.S. has eight on the east coast, 17 on the west coast, two in the mid-west, and four in Canada. Among the 100 churches functioning in difficult areas, there are two in Turkey as well as a school dedicated to the memory of martyred journalist Hrant Dink.

In Turkey, there is also Camp Armen, seized by the Turkish government and finally returned in 2015. Moreover, in Lebanon, there is the acclaimed Haigazian University, established in 1955, with a current student body of 700. Among its numerous well-known graduates are its current President, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Historian and Scholar Dr. Yervant Kassouny and Genocide Scholar Dr. Khachig Mouradian.

In addition to these areas, there has been a crucial humanitarian focus on the seven-year crisis in war-torn Syria, where the AMAA, among a few other organizations, commands a leading role of sustenance and support. Mr. Khanjian was influential in the creation of SARF, the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund operating out of California since 2012, and chaired it for two years.

EDUCATION IS ITS BLOODSTREAM

"The AMAA is like a physical body with education as its bloodstream, the core. Armenian Evangelicals, and thousands of Armenian youth, who have been educated in the Middle East after the Genocide, attended Armenian Evangelical schools, with every school supported by the AMAA. Close to fifty percent of Armenian students in the Middle East have passed through the gates of Armenian Evangelical Schools sustained by the AMAA," Mr. Khanjian revealed.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, Zaven Khanjian's *raison d'être* in life and existence comes down to "FAITH WITHOUT WORK IS FUTILE." The church, its Sunday School, and the choir were the focus of his youth. "The church and school in Aleppo have been my home," he declared with emphasis. "They were the first gayaran-station for me and for the survivors, widows, and orphans." During the Genocide, he lost both grandfathers from Arapkir.

A graduate of the American University of Beirut, majoring in Business Administration, he came to the U.S. in 1979, and worked mainly in real estate and development. He and his wife Sona (nee Kelikian), have two sons, one daughter and six grandchildren.

It is now 2 1/2 years that he has been the Executive Director of the AMAA. "This is my love," he declared with emphasis. "The AMAA is a unique organization. Its foundation is the spiritual life of the Armenian people. It is the combination of

attention to the spiritual and physical lives of the Armenian nation that keeps me bonded to the AMAA."

A member of the Armenian Evangelical Church, he calls the church "the focus of our lives following the teachings of Christ. Christ, God incarnate, was spirited, engaged, involved all the time and with all segments of society. Showing love and compassion, kindness and sacrifice, He reached out to all, teaching, educating, forgiving, feeding the hungry, quenching the thirsty, healing the sick and this should be our way of life as well." □

Official Call to the 98th Annual Meeting Of the Armenian Missionary Association of America



The 98th Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will be held on Saturday, October 21, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. at the AMAA Headquarters 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. All members of the AMAA are invited to attend the Meeting to:

- I. Consider and approve the reports of the Officers, Committees, Chapters and Affiliated Boards of the Association for the fiscal year 2016-2017;
- II. Review the financial reports for the fiscal year 2016-2017;
- III. Announce the names of the newly elected Board members;
- IV. Elect members to the Nominating Committee;
- V. Elect an Auditor; and
- VI. Consider and address any other business that may come before the membership.

PROGRAM OF THE 98th ANNUAL MEETING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Thursday, October 19th at the AMAA Headquarters

- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Armenian Evangelical World Council Meeting

Friday, October 20th at the AMAA Headquarters

- 9:30 am Armenian Evangelical World Council Meeting
- 12:00 pm Lunch
- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm AMAA Board of Directors' Meeting

Saturday, October 21st at the AMAA Headquarters

- 9:30 am 98th Annual Meeting
- 12:30 pm Lunch
- 1:30 pm AMAA Board of Directors' Meeting (Short Session)

Saturday, October 21st at the Marriott at Glenpointe, Teaneck, NJ

- 6:00 pm Reception
- 7:00 pm Banquet

Sunday, October 22nd at the Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ

- 11:00 am 98th Annual Meeting Worship Service and Installation of AMAA Officers
- 12:00 pm Light Lunch

Two Benefactors to be Honored at AMAA Centennial Banquet, October 21

By Florence Avakian

On October 21, 2017, the Edward Avedisian and Charles Bilezikian families will be honored at the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Banquet in New Jersey, for their generous and far-reaching philanthropy in Armenia, Artsakh and the United States.

Both families have contributed to dozens of causes, but one of the most important and inspiring projects was the building of a 100,000-square foot school, Armenia's first green school – Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School and Community Center, located in the Malatia-Sepastia region of Yerevan called Bangladesh, chosen because it is the most impoverished area of Armenia's capital city.

THE AVEDISIAN FAMILY story begins during the Genocide when several dozen immediate and extended family members on both Edward Avedisian's mother's and father's side from Kharpert were killed. His father, Khoren, who had been trained to be a priest, had come to New England in 1905 to work and send money back for the support of his family. As the Genocide was soon to begin they told him not to return, the result of which wiped out most of his family.

His mother, Shooshanig, who survived the Genocide by being in the German Missionary School, received wonderful care and an education. She eventually went to Aleppo with her mother. Khoren Avedisian, who had heard of her through a friend, had sent her his photo and after an exchange of letters went to Cuba, where he met and married her in 1926, before coming to the United States. Yes, Shooshanig was a picture bride. Their union produced four children, Paramaz, Zvart, Edward and Paul. Though the family had little money during the Depression era, Khoren brought the three surviving family members to America.

A VALUABLE LESSON NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

Mr. Avedisian refers to an experience in his childhood when his mother, who had survived the Armenian Genocide, was raising a family of four children together with her husband Khoren. At the end of World War II, when all the textile mills in New England were closing, his mother who had been working in a mill was laid off her job and was collecting unemployment checks while looking for new employment. "She asked me to accompany her on one trip to the unemployment office as I needed new shoes before school started in September and to also buy the necessary groceries for the following week."

"We arrived at the office well before the 9am deadline and were still standing in line when the office manager arrived and ordered everyone to leave and closed the office. We left the building forlorn and heartbroken. I'll never forget, it was a beautiful sunny summer day and for what seemed like forever when mother suddenly said let's go. I asked where and she said to the Mayor's Office because the Mayor had attended an Armenian function the year before (election time) and had told everybody that if you have any problems come and see me, my door is always open. At 9 years old, I already knew that



Pamela and Edward Avedisian celebrating the grand opening of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School and Community Center.

was not to be believed. So off we went to Mayor McCoy's Office. She lodged her complaint to the Mayor who promptly put in a call to the unemployment office and instructed the manager to have my mother's check ready, as she would soon be there again. Sure enough, we went back, got the check, bought new shoes for me, purchased food for the following week and went home. It was just another day of challenge in the life of an immigrant but for sure an undocumented Profile in Courage."

"How could I let those kids down in Armenia after I had learned a very important lesson from my mother when I was very young," says Mr. Avedisian, in a telephone interview with this writer. Edward Avedisian, a gifted professional musician, successful investor, generous philanthropist, and Ellis Island Award winner added, "Those lessons didn't come easily. That experience taught me a lot," he says proudly.

FIRST GREEN SCHOOL IN ARMENIA

"If the Germans did so much for children like my mother during the Genocide, why can't Armenians do the same for Armenians," declares Mr. Avedisian who founded this school and is its main benefactor.

Edward Avedisian and his wife Pamela, who have gone to Armenia 30 times beginning in 1982, say "there is no school like the Avedisian School in Armenia or the entire South Caucasus. This first

solar-heated designed school building, spearheaded by Senior Advisor, Architect Ronald Altoon with solar design by Armen Gharibyan, was opened in 2014 with great fanfare, with attendees including Armenian President Serge Sargsyan, and wide coverage on Armenian television and radio.

Besides its solar-powered uniqueness, the school has the highest academic standards, is non-sectarian and is specifically for the children of families who are experiencing socio-economic difficulties in this poorest area of Yerevan. “We want to give these children a chance to excel, and they have been responding by winning country-wide competitions,” Mr. Avedisian declares with obvious pride.

The government is now pushing for many government buildings to be solar-powered. It is the best thing for Armenia because the country is so polluted and as a result has a very high cancer rate, explains Mr. Avedisian. “By using solar, you get free power, no pollution and a reduction in the cancer rate, just by harnessing the sun.”

Jeanmarie Papelian, a former AMAA Board of Directors member, also on the Avedisian School Building Committee, and a good friend of both the Avedisian and Bilezikian families, related that this new school replaced the former decrepit building. She revealed that when Edward Avedisian’s mother Shooshanig turned 90 in 1994 her birthday present was to replicate, in Armenia, the Orphanage she attended which was operated by German Missionaries in Kharpert. This 90th Birthday Celebration was in fact the birth of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School and Community Center that was to be operated by the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Ms. Papelian revealed that Edward and Pamela Avedisian are also principal benefactors for the Paramaz Avedisian Building at the American University of Armenia (AUA), in memory of his brother Paramaz, where students who cannot afford the tuition, can attend without charge.

In June of 2017 the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School will celebrate its first 12th grade graduation since its inception 18 years ago in 1999. The school is especially pleased that the Commencement Speaker will be from the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) in New York.

For his many contributions to Armenia, which have included philanthropy to the American University of Armenia and the Dzidzernagapert Genocide Memorial as well as the complete renovation of a school in the Haghtanag Village and the Nork Children’s Cardiac Hospital, Edward Avedisian was twice awarded the Movses Khorenatsi Medal by President Serge Sargsyan.

This medal, which is Armenia’s highest honor, is for contributions to education, culture, literature and the arts. Mr. Avedisian’s professional history includes being a world class clarinetist for three decades with the Boston Pops, four decades with the Boston Ballet Orchestra, soloist with Armenia Philharmonic, Adjunct Professor of Music at Boston University, and Artistic Administrator of the Harvard Chamber Orchestra, among many others.

BILEZIKIAN PHILANTHROPY

The Charles and Doreen Bilezikian family has contributed greatly to the Avedisian School by building its elementary wing in memory of his parents Krikor and Beatrice Bilezikian, as well as the Bilezikian Family Library. They have also funded a kindergarten in Shushi, Artsakh, which is operated by the AMAA.

Doreen (nee Portnoy) who was married to Charles Bilezikian for 52 years, and who is of Jewish background, speaks enthusiastically of the closeness of the two ethnic groups, and their history of



Doreen and the late Charles Bilezikian cut the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony of the Krikor and Beatrice Bilezikian Building of Avedisian School.

genocide. “Armenians and Jews believe in a close family, education, and share cultural values,” she says. “We have always believed that through education a child can become a better citizen and can give to society more than it receives,” she related in a telephone conversation.

“My husband’s father hailed from Marash, and mother from Harpoot. Marash was protected by the French who then pulled out for political reasons. “The French escaped silently by covering the hooves of their horses. My father-in-law Krikor Bilezikian knew that if he stayed in Marash, he would be killed by the Turks, so he followed the French out, and walked all the way to Aleppo on foot.”

The AMAA, she says in tribute, has always looked out for emigres. “They found my husband’s two uncles and the rest of the surviving Kasparians, and reunited them with the rest of the family in Boston.”

In America, the Bilezikians are a rags to riches saga, starting one *Christmas Tree Shop*, which mushroomed into a very successful chain of stores throughout several states.

Doreen and her late husband, who have two sons, Gregory and Jeffrey, and six grandchildren, visited Armenia four times, donating to various causes. Before his passing last year, the two sons went to Armenia with Charles’ expressed desire that they continue his contributions in Armenia.

“The country has changed dramatically in 20 years. It is trying very hard to develop a stable economy,” she observes.

Doreen, who is having a difficult time getting over the loss of her husband, calls the Bilezikians “part of my family. They are warm, loving, and I am very blessed and fortunate to have them.”

She reminisces emotionally that every year for 80 years, the Bilezikian and Kasparian families have gotten together at the Armenian Memorial Church hall in Watertown, MA to celebrate Thanksgiving together, thus “uniting four generations.”

In tribute to the two honorees, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian stated that the Armenian Missionary Association of America, which funds and operates the tuition-free Avedisian School in Yerevan and the Bilezikian Kindergarten in Shushi, “salutes the grace and humanity of the generous benefactors, and is looking forward to honoring them at the East Coast Centennial Banquet on October 21, 2017. We call on the community to save the date and join the AMAA in honoring the Avedisian and Bilezikian families.” □

THE PROMISE

NOW PLAYING

Empires fall. Love survives.



The Promise, Musa Dagh, and the Relevance of Rev. Dikran Antreasian

By Vahram Shemmassian, Ph.D.

Many people, Armenians and non-Armenians alike, have watched, and continue to watch, the feature film, “The Promise.” It is a love story that segues into the Armenian Genocide. Numerous news items, commentaries, critiques, and interviews have been published, circulated on-line, and aired on television. The opinions vary. Whatever one’s impression of the film, it is an important cinematic depiction of the horrors that the Armenian nation suffered during World War I.

The last segment of the movie deals with the Musa Dagh resistance and its triumphant outcome. In this saga, Armenian Evangelical Pastor Rev. Dikran Antreasian played a leading role in 1915. Nearly forgotten as such for decades, he has been elevated to prominence in recent historiography, and rightly so. Besides, to be with his people, his remains have been transplanted onto the Armenian Evangelical church-school premises and his bust has been mounted on a pedestal at the Musa Dagh resistance monument complex, both in Anjar, Lebanon. These revered sites are living testimonials to his contribution to the survival of thousands of fellow Armenians from certain annihilation. But it is also incumbent upon us to demonstrate the relevance of Rev. Antreasian and other brave men and women in modern times, and for the future.

How can this be achieved? I would propose the following projects.

First, within the larger context of the Genocide, a documentary must be prepared to highlight the truly heroic exploits of Armenian Evangelical pastors such as Rev. Antreasian, Rev. Aharon Shirajian and Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian, to name just three, during and or after the World War I ordeal. These men practiced what they preached, put their lives on the line, and through unwavering faith in God defied tyranny and won. The documentary can be screened in day schools, Sunday Schools, youth camps, church functions, and

commemorative-celebratory events.

Second, an illustrated children’s book, or a series of books, must be published about these and other servants of God as role models and sources of inspiration for youngsters. Sometimes parents argue that children should not be exposed to the Genocide at a young age. In my view, any subject matter can be taught to any age group provided it is done in an age-appropriate manner.

This book project—disseminated in print and electronically—can certainly be considered apropos.

Third, posters depicting these legendary Armenians as symbols of righteousness must be prepared and posted in every Armenian household, institution of learning, youth club, and pertinent venue. We should thus make every effort to convey the message of these larger-than-life figures to our youth. Many other projects can be conceived and realized.

Armenian Evangelicals worldwide—indeed all Armenians—have the necessary talent, creativity, expertise and financial means to achieve these and similar projects. People continue to ask, “What after the Centennial?” We should not seek answers elsewhere, for they lie within us. The movie “The Promise,” the Musa Dagh episode, and Rev. Dikran Antreasian certainly trigger, if nothing else, critical thinking in search of practical solutions to our myriad needs. □



Rev. Dikran Antreasian.

LARK Musical Society in Partnership with AMAA Performs Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* At Landmark Pasadena Church

By Phyllis Hamo

The sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Pasadena, built in 1924, provided an ideal setting in size and acoustics for the Lark Musical Society production of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. The magnificent concert performed on March 4, during the first week of Lent, was directed by legendary Lark conductor Vatsche Barsoumian and dedicated, in partnership with the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), to the victims of the wars in Syria and Artsakh.

For an hour-and-a-half, with no intermission, Maestro Barsoumian, whose directing arms could be compared with the outstretched wings of an eagle, skillfully conducted the Lark Chorus (nearly 100 strong), the Tziatzan Treble Choir, the Lark Grand and Chamber Orchestras, the resonating pipe organ, the voices of three accomplished soloists, and a children's choir stationed in the church's wrap-around balcony. Soprano Shoushik Barsoumian sang the Latin sections of the Requiem, Tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan and Baritone Edward Levy performed Wilfred Owen's poems. Local music lovers, and AMAA members who had traveled across the country were in awe.

The audience was welcomed by AMAA Board member Ken Kevorkian, Chairman of the event, and by Andranik Andy Torosyan, Chairman of the Lark Board of Directors who praised the Lark choirs and musicians and encouraged everyone to "pray for everlasting peace." Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, offered the invocation, petitioning prayers for "victims of war in Artsakh, Syria, Armenia, and throughout the Diaspora." The breathtaking Requiem offered an emotional prayer for peace, just as meaningful today as it was when it was first performed more than a half century ago.

The Requiem was written by Britten for the 1962 consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, a building destroyed by bombs during the Battle of Britain in 1940. According to AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, "Britten's War Requiem is one of the biggest masterpieces that the 20th century has produced, inspired by one of the most tragic pages of human history."

This creation of Britten, a lifelong pacifist, combined the Latin Requiem Mass with nine wartime poems written by British poet, Wilfred Owen, who became a pacifist while serving in WW I. Through his poetry, Mr. Owen denounced the wickedness of war. Sadly, he was killed in action during WW I in France at the young age of 25. He is quoted as saying, "All a poet can do is warn."



Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian.

During her pre-concert lecture, Doris Melkonian, who holds a Master of Arts degree in Musicology from UCLA, explained how difficult it was to compose a musical work that demonstrated the concept of death. She also denoted the layers of themes within the production.

The Lark Musical Society has served the Greater Los Angeles Community for more than 20 years with an annual student enrollment of 200, ages 5 to 20, and continuous goals in musical performance, education and publication. More than 1,000 performances have featured the works of Komitas, Sayat Nova, Chukajian, Khachaturian, Mansurian, and other Armenian and Western Classical composers. The Lark Musical Society and AMAA have been collaborating with Annual Concerts since 1996. □



Merdinian School's 35th Anniversary Honors Harold and Frances DeMirjian

By Joyce Abdulian

The scene at the Wilshire Country Club on May 7 was joyous as friends of the C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School gathered together to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the School's founding.

The evening opened with an Invocation by Rev. Dr. Vartkes Kassouni, former Minister of the United Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles, and one of the pioneers of Merdinian School. Principal Lina Arslanian expressed her appreciation to members of the Banquet Committee and shared her thoughts about how the School prepares students for life—giving examples of their academic achievements, such as participation in the Johns Hopkins talent search, and awards won at the Science Fair.

Dee Chorlian and Diana Mangioglu Nazarian served as Banquet Committee Co-Chairs. Diana Mangioglu Nazarian, along with MC Tamar Yeghishian, described their impressions as school parents. Both Mrs. Nazarian and Mrs. Yeghishian inspired the crowd with their heartfelt acknowledgement of the outstanding Armenian, Christian-based education provided by Merdinian School. They praised Principal Arslanian and teachers for their unique professionalism and devotion.

Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), delivered greetings from the AMAA. Merdinian School is under the auspices of the AMAA.

After a delicious dinner, Juliette Abdulian, Vice Chair of the Merdinian School Board of Directors, introduced the honorees—Harold and Frances DeMirjian. Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, Chairman, presented Harold and Frances with the “Lifetime Achievement Award” for decades of devoted service to the School. The Honorable Adrin Nazarian presented the honorees with a resolution from the California State Assembly. The DeMirjians poignantly expressed their gratitude for being honored—claiming it a privilege. Sharing their honor were daughter Debbie DeMirjian, son Steve DeMirjian and his wife Carol Rainey DeMirjian.

Merdinian School Women's Auxiliary Co-Chairs, Ani Hanessian and Louisa Janbazian, presented the School with a check for \$25,000 in support of the School's scholarship program. Dr. Nalbandian announced that Marie-Louise Meneshian and her brother, Robert Meneshian, had donated \$15,000 to establish a scholarship fund in their name and pledged to make annual additions to the fund. The Meneshians also offered to match any donations to the School for its scholarship programs.

Keynote speaker, the Honorable Adrin Nazarian, shared how he and his wife, Diana, are grateful to have their two sons studying at Merdinian—immersed in the legacy of our Armenian heritage, along with an acclaimed education. He believes Merdinian empowers the students to achieve personal and academic growth in a warm,

family environment. Mr. Nazarian presented Merdinian School with a resolution from the California State Assembly.

The musical program was comprised of two segments: Mary Balian Saghbazarian, accompanied by her young daughter Lena, sang several songs. Later, Nektarine Chilyan sang and played the



Harold DeMirjian addresses guests at the Banquet.



L to R: Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, Juliette Abdulian, Frances and Harold DeMirjian and Hon. Adrin Nazarian.

Kanoun, an ancient Middle Eastern musical instrument. Pastor Harut Khachatryan, Youth Pastor of United Armenian Congregational Church, concluded the evening with a Benediction. □

Merдинian Students at Home at the AMAA Headquarters

On Friday, May 5, a group of students from the C. & E. Merдинian Armenian Evangelical School in California, accompanied by some teachers and parents, visited the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ to become acquainted with the Association that founded the School 35 years ago. The students were on a trip to the east coast and also visited Washington D.C., Philadelphia and New York City.

At the AMAA they were greeted by Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO, and the AMAA staff. They toured the building and met with Mr. Khanjian in the Board room. Mr. Khanjian welcomed them into their home, as the mother organization who founded Merдинian School 35 years ago, and briefly talked about the world wide mission of the Association. Mr. Khanjian also spoke to them about the importance of Armenian Christian education, wished them success in pursuit of their higher education, and in the future, as they choose their careers, to bring their own contribution to the American-Armenian Community.



Sold Out Crowd Attends AMAA's Child and Orphan Care Luncheon March 11 At the Beverly Hills Hotel

On March 11, the Beverly Hills Hotel was the beautiful setting for the annual AMAA Child and Orphan Care Luncheon. The Luncheon Co-Chairs, Sandy Bedrosian, Caroline Tufenkian and Ani Zakari, worked tirelessly to make every aspect of the Luncheon enjoyable for more than 500 guests and supporters who attended. Erika MacArthur delivered a moving devotional and prayer and Joyce Stein thanked everyone for their commitment and support of the needy children in Armenia and Karabagh.

The flowers, generously donated by Zareh David Ghoukasian of **David Z Design**, were breathtaking! And this year's Silent Auction was fantastic—with many items to select from. Guests enjoyed bidding on designer bags, beautiful jewelry, and much, much more, including two beautiful diamond pieces donated by **Kazanjian Jewelers** in Beverly Hills. There were many opportunities to help the needy children by sponsoring a child, or by purchasing a Bible for them to read. This effort was coordinated by Maro Yacoubian and Tina Segel who organized the Child Sponsorship Program table. Many children were sponsored at the Luncheon.

Tina Segel produced the video showing the Tovmassian children, who are Syrian refugees sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). Zaven Khanjian,



Children models on the runway at the Fashion Show.

Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, also discussed the video and explained the immediate need to help Syrian refugees who are struggling. Through the AMAA, many children and their families have received the help they need to survive in a time of crisis.

Before the Fashion Show, there was a special gymnastics performance by Anahit Cholakyan. The Children's Fashion Show and dance performance was coordinated and introduced by Betty Balian. This year, once again, the Fashion Show was sponsored and produced by **Bloomingdale's Sherman Oaks**. Aleen Oruncakciel, who coordinated all the models and fittings for the Fashion Show, thanked Bloomingdale's and the models for their participation.

The finance and reservations Chair, Sandra Kalemkarian, works tirelessly every year to efficiently close out the Auction. "We are grateful for the generous donations we received this year," said Sandra.

The guests left the event with a bag full of goodies, including, among other things, amazing lotions and nail care products donated by **Jessica Vartoughian of Jessica Cosmetics**. On their way out, the guests had a wonderful candy table to choose delicious candies from—all donated by Caroline Tufenkian and Ani Zakari.

In closing, Lori Muncherian and Arsine Phillips, the West Coast Co-Chairs of the AMAA's Child and Orphan Care Committee, thanked the chairs, the entire committee and all the donors for their continued support of this event for the children in Armenia. "We are trying to help change a child's life and give hope for a better future one child at a time," said Lori and Arsine. □



AMAA's LA Area Child and Orphan Care Committee.

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits Armenian Organization and Church in Minnesota

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, was invited to deliver the Keynote address at a special Armenian Genocide Commemoration event at St. Sahag Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Paul, Minnesota on April 24. The event was sponsored by the Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota (ACOM) and the Parish Council of St. Sahag Armenian Apostolic Church.

Founded in 1980 and headquartered in St. Paul, the ACOM is the oldest and largest Armenian organization in the state.

Mr. Khanjian was introduced by his longtime friend, Azad Mesrobian, who is involved in ACOM and is a member of the Church. Both Mr. Khanjian and Mr. Mesrobian were from Aleppo, attended Sunday School together and graduated from Aleppo College.

Mr. Khanjian was honored to speak about the means and values of recognizing the Armenian Genocide, his personal struggles and the Armenian quest for justice.

«Minnesota has a small but active, vibrant and engaged Armenian cultural and spiritual leadership,» said Mr. Khanjian. «The ACOM Board, composed of many dedicated professionals, is keen to uphold national values, commemorate significant occasions,



Azad Mesrobian, Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan and Zaven Khanjian.

revive cultural life and retain and perpetuate identity. I hope that my visit and Genocide commemoration message contributed to that noble effort in the State of Minnesota.” □

Pursuit of the Iron Ladle

Message of Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO in Minnesota, April 24, 2017

Two years ago on April 24, 2015, the world, well, the world that orbits around us, commemorated the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

Today is April 24, 2017.

Collectively, humanity has surrendered two more years to the whirlpool of history.

It was a solemn occasion, a distinct anniversary. An occasion to relive the anguish and yet rejoice the miracle of survival. An anniversary that stirred both sorrow and pride in our collective soul.

Justifiably, and following the poet's example, we can and ought to ask ourselves.

Յաշուէյարդար, ինչ մնաց, կեանքին ինձի ինչ մնաց:

‘To sum it up, what remains? From the Centennial, what remains?’

I want to start sharing a personal story, which will be a prelude to our expectations, aspirations and dreams emanating from our struggle for recognition of the Armenian Genocide and quest for justice.

You have probably heard of Armen Aroyan, a prominent member of the Southern California Armenian community. Armen

Aroyan earned his fame during the past three decades since he pioneered to lead hundreds of Armenians from all over the world and in particular, the United States, to visit their ancestral homeland in occupied historic Armenia.

Two of my sisters and my brother took this pilgrimage back to their roots in the early 90s.

At the time, I was not yet ready. For a long time I did not have the predisposition and psychological maturity to confront the people and the country which stopped the clock on the lives of my two grandfathers, half my nation and most of my historical fatherland in their attempted Genocide of 1915.

My sister Laura took her trip to her ancestral home in September 1994. On a hillside in Agin, a village in the outskirts of Arapkir, sit two homes one across from the other. They belong to my paternal and maternal grandfathers. My father was born in one of these homes a few years before the ‘Yeghern’ started. Aroyan has taken many of his guests who visit the area to drive by the street and has talked to them about the Khanjian heritage. Not everyone is privileged to enter the house. My sister however, not only had the opportunity but the right to be there and she was not deprived.

During the tour, the matriarch of the family, a woman of my father's age and generation, who personally knew my father and had hosted him in the house on two occasions in the 50s and 60s, points to a room in the house and invites my sister in.

My father was born in that room.

Entering the room, praying, sobbing, touching and talking to the walls, my sister would have thought her pilgrimage had culminated.

However, there was more in store for her.

As she gets ready to leave, the matriarch gathers her family around her and instructs.

'Anytime this lady or one of her siblings visit the house, you welcome them with dignity and respect and treat them like the owners of the house.'

In 2006, it was my turn.

My wife and I took our pilgrimage to our roots.

Before taking the trip, Sona and I wondered as to how we could make the pilgrimage to the land, to the parental home, significant and memorable. How can we honor and memorialize my two grandfathers, brutally killed on this soil; my father, resting in a foreign soil with the longing and love of Agin and all those who were martyred for the sin of having been born Armenian. We contemplated, concluded and planned to plant a tree, a walnut tree, in the backyard of my paternal grandfather's home where my father was born. A walnut tree will live long, develop, grow and flourish. It will provide shade and shelter to those living under it. It will be strong, firm and long-lived providing fruit for years unknown. All that to immortalize the sacred sacrament of the renowned poet Levon Zaven Surmelian who penned

«Մեռելներու իբրեւ խաչ՝ ես այս ծառը տնկեցի»

"As a cross for my departed, I planted this tree"

Walking up a hill, Aroyan leads us to the house. In my haste, I find myself leading the group with the walnut sapling in my hand. I notice an adult man on the balcony who is the son of the matriarch my sister had met earlier. I salute him in my broken Turkish and without waiting for his welcoming words enter the house and walk up the stairs to the upper floor. Restless and uncomfortable, I introduce myself to the 'owner' and immediately realize that he knows me well, he knows my father and the whole Khanjian clan. He describes in detail my father's second visit to Agin in 1969 when he was a boy of thirteen. He talks about the Khanjians, Armenian Turkish relationship, the 'exodus' of the Armenians. He talks about his profession, his father and recites how his father had acquired the house. He talks about his mother who my sister had met in 1994 and says she died in 1998. Evidently, faithful to her mother's commandment, Hussain, that was his name, affirms that we could be his guests in the house anytime and for as long as we desire. All the while, he is following me in my emotional walk through the house. Suddenly, he approaches me, and throwing an arm on my shoulder, I wonder out of guilt or anxiety, asks me in an easily understood Turkish.

"Now tell me, IS THIS YOUR HOUSE OR MINE?"

I feel a blow on my head. A cold sweat covers my face. I did not answer. Instead, with a forced smile and pointing to the walnut sapling placed on the table, I said:

I have a gift for you, where shall we plant it?

Hussain and I plant the tree; the late Serpazan Arch. Datev

Gharibian of Brazil blesses it following Surmelian's prayer.

"Lord, bless this tender tree. Here I plant it

In the crumbly and black soil where my ancestors are lain"

We leave with Hussain's question lingering in my head. "Is This Your House or Mine?"

I wrote a book about our pilgrimage and you guessed it, the title was.

"Is This House Yours or Mine?"

Dr. Taner Akcam, the Turkish Historian who currently holds the Kaloosdian – Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, is one of the foremost proponents of dialogue between Armenians and Turks. At a lecture in Toronto on May 25, 2001, where the Zoryan Institute launched Akcam's publication titled, "Dialogue Across International Divide: Essays Toward a Turkish-Armenian Dialogue" (He has since published several books covering the Armenian Genocide) he explains:

"Someone looking at me sees only one person, but I represent the tip of the iceberg of those involved in the process, who are seeking an open society in Turkey. I am a product of this process in Turkey and I am not alone. Civil society in Turkey knows that without coming to terms with history, we cannot build a democracy in Turkey. Not only we should remember history, but actually to institutionalize remembering is essential for the process of democratization."

Two years after the Centennial, we are gathered here tonight to commemorate the anniversary of the Genocide.

What do we want today?

Two years ago, we poured in our hearts and commemorated the Centennial.

So going back to Vahan Tekeyan, we ask ourselves:

'To sum it up, what remains? From the Centennial, what remains?'

It should be jubilantly acknowledged that we worked hard and can confidently claim a degree of reward and victory. The Centennial raised our national struggle to an unprecedented plateau of universal awareness, respect and recognition that was worthy of the cause and powerful in its impact. Intangible victories may be, but nevertheless a firm foundation upon which we can (and should) continuously build.

The inevitable and hard question to ask is – what comes next?

The path is still long and thorny, the obstacles and hindrances many. However, the collective will and determination is in place and our resolute faith in our just struggle is unshakable. God is the foundation of our quest for justice and the recognition of the truth. We need not sit idle in acquiescence. The struggle continues.

Despite the many achievements and victories, we have not gained much on the road of reparations, restitutions and recognition from the heirs of the perpetrators. All recognition, sympathy and acknowledgment in the civilized world have come with impunity without legal muscle. The heirs of the perpetrators still lie in a deep coma of self-denial. Adding insult to injury, the 'civilized' world, with total acquiescence, turned a blind eye to the continuing crime committed by the same perpetrator in Syria. The institutionalization of remembrance and the move toward democratization in Turkey that Taner Akcam was talking about in 2001 remains hostage in 2017 to the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish penal code which criminalizes any and all remembrance of the Genocide. And despite the goodwill of a mountain of Turkish or Kurdish intellectuals in-

volved in the process and seeking an open society in Turkey, Hrant Dink was murdered by the Deep State in Turkey and ten years after his martyrdom his trial has still not exposed the masters behind the hired assassin, 17 year old Ogun Samast. Erdogan remains on a fast pace of amending the constitution pulling Turkey behind and creating an autocratic regime with most powers centralized in the hands of 'sultan' Erdogan.

In the face of all these challenges from the East and the hegemony, hypocrisy and double standards of the West we can only depend on ourselves. The realization of our quest for justice remains solely on our selfless and sacrificial devotion and commitment to the application of Khrimian Hayrig's 'Iron Ladle'. Երկաթե Շերեփ

Over the span of time and under the effect of various conditions and circumstances, which influence our national path, our priorities, focus and agendas, should justifiably remain flexible and malleable. Our collective psyche cannot and should not remain hostage to the fetters of the Genocide. Therefore, until that promised dawn when our collective national soul is able to bring the 'Iron Ladle' home without any impediment or procrastination we have to focus on the following essential priorities.

A. Homeland

In 2016, Armenia celebrated the 25th anniversary of independence. Despite the fact that we had no input in the realization of our collective dream; despite the fact that we were even confused for a while; we were jubilant. We had our place in the league of nations. We raised our heads in dignity and pride and saluted the tricolor. We built a nation and created a country from the ashes of the Soviet system. We bore the shock therapy of moving from a very centralized socialist economy to a radical capitalist system, from an atheist system that persecuted believers, to a society, which created an unprecedented opportunity to resurrect the faith of our fathers in the land of a nation, which embraced Christianity in 301 AD. We fought a liberation war in Artsakh, and at the cost of thousands of martyred lives, enormous economic sacrifices and a faithful and supportive diaspora we were able to win the war.

Twenty-five years after independence, we are not where we wanted to be. The road has not been rosy as our Homeland continues to face the challenges of tumultuous times. Having won a liberation war, we failed to win the peace and continue to face an aggressive enemy whose consistent breaches of a shaky ceasefire have reaped the lives of hundreds of young conscripts defending our borders, and countless civilians peacefully living on their land. An enemy, whose behavior continues to obstruct scores of development projects so vital for the economy of the area. Our Homeland continues to experience skyrocketing unemployment, extreme poverty, economic paralysis, mass migration, the rise of oligarchs and widespread corruption.

We have not and should not lose faith. Our vision of the new citizen in the Homeland is one of indelible integrity, who upholds the highest values and earns an unblemished reputation. One who advocates social justice, freedom of conscience, expression or speech; a citizen who exercises voluntarism, sustains society, respects human rights and sacrifices for the Homeland; a citizen who respects the law and equal rights of others under the law; a citizen who loves the Lord and reflects His love. These are fundamental prerequisites of the concrete foundation of a strong, self-sustained, proud developing democracy, ripe for a growing

economy that will create a new, creative and happy society and a strong army capable to defend its borders. There lies the hope of the promised 'Iron Ladle' in the Homeland.

B. Diaspora

Centuries of persecution, invasion, aggression, discrimination, usurpation and successive massacres have created waves of exodus from our historic Homeland resulting in the Armenian Diaspora. The 1915 Genocide was the culmination of all, dispersing the remnants of the survivors all over the world. Independence brought the hope of a shrinking Diaspora but the reality on the ground came to expand the Armenian Diaspora because of the exodus from the Homeland. The story of the Diaspora is not the subject of the day. However, it is essential to recognize the realities of an expanding Diaspora in terms of its struggle to perpetuate (զոյապահպանել) կամ ազգապահպանել) and enormous potential to assist the Homeland.

In order to achieve that desired role we have to attain a healthy and prosperous Diaspora. The reality on the ground here too seems to be short of the aspired.

For many decades after the Genocide, the throbbing heart of the Armenian Diaspora remained to be the communities of the Middle East. Active, thriving, energetic, industrious and spirited communities remained the beehive of Armenian culture and education, exporting able leadership in all realms of Armenian community life all over the globe. No more. The Achilles' Heel of the Armenia Diaspora remains the tragic situation in Syria. Five years of death and destruction has devastated the Mother Diaspora Community of Syria, dispersing its masses across the region and beyond and diminishing its role and power potential. It is hard to shape an 'Iron Ladle' in the region.

Despite all the difficulties described above I see a new dawn rising on the horizon of the new Armenian Diaspora. What we came to witness at the Genocide Centennial and since then, has anchored an unwavering confidence in our youth, making us proud of their alertness, accomplishments, creativity, sense of belonging and sense of responsibility. A mental survey of our youth around the globe reveals that never before in the history of our nation have we had such an army of students in higher education who constitute contingents of potential professionals, scientists, educators, and prominent stars in the fields of science, art and public service ready to take charge of our communities. Are we molding an 'Iron Ladle?' I do not know but I am optimistic.

With the strength gathered thru the legendary Kirk Kerkorian's "Promise"; Near East Foundation's "They Shall Not Perish" just aired on PBS; and the baby steps of the recently conceived Armenian American Museum in Glendale, California to give a few examples, we seem to be on the right path.

With a strong and truly democratic Homeland and a new Diaspora taking shape we vow to perpetuate the faith, the language, the culture and overcome evil with song and dance, hope and prayer, smiles and joy all for the Glory of God who said in Romans 12:19 "It is mine to avenge; I will repay."

Erdogan can dream of an Empire and hold tight to Article 301. However, the heirs of the Matriarch of Agin, her son Hussain, Taner Akcam and his fellow intellectuals will multiply and prevail.

God is faithful; He will deliver the 'Iron Ladle.'

Thank You! ☐

CENTENNIAL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



Haigazian University

Haigazian University was established in 1955 in Beirut, Lebanon by the joint endeavors of the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Near East. Haigazian is home campus to students from 20 countries throughout the world. As a vital place of learning, the Centennial Campaign supports Haigazian University with a goal of \$4 million toward the endowment funds which provide tuition support for students.



A Desert Rose

Bear Grylls, the British adventurer and television presenter, once said, "The rules of survival never change, whether you're in a desert or an arena." These are words that Alik Sarian, Haigazian University freshman and HU's Future Armenian Leadership Fund (FALF) scholarship recipient lives by. Coming straight out of war-torn Aleppo with her family last summer, Alik has emerged on campus with a clear direction and focus. Life and hope have emerged from a wilderness. In the words of the prophet, "The desert... shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." (Isaiah 35:1) But behind her sweet shyness and pleasant demeanor is an inner determination and resolution to be her best and to make an impact on society as she prepares her future to help those in greatest need.

Besides being honored on the President's List, Fall 2017, Alik has also become a rising star as the starting point guard on the Haigazian University Women's basketball team. Just recently she earned her personal best, with twenty-seven points in a 51-28 win against the University of Balamand, topping her twenty-three points against LAU (Byblos) only days before.

But Alik's drive to excel is nothing new. Under constant danger in Aleppo, Alik managed to play basketball and take piano lessons while also pursuing her high school career. A stellar student, she represented the Karen Jeppe Armenian College well, winning first place in the (All) Syrian Science Olympiad four years straight. When the fighting intensified, with daily bombings in her neighborhood, the school moved to the safer,



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smaller Gulbenkian Middle School, and her studies were never disrupted. With Alik's diploma and her acceptance to Haigazian University in hand, the entire family (father, mother, and younger sister) uprooted themselves and moved to Lebanon in August, where years earlier her grandfather had wisely invested in property in Jounieh. Though safe and secure, Alik and her family's transition and experiences have not been unaccompanied by challenges. Alik has been met with some unfounded biases: distrust, prejudice and misinterpreting her to be uneducated because of her Syrian Arabic dialect.

But true to form and undeterred, Alik keeps her eyes on the horizon. She is fascinated by science, but is more interested in entering a field where she can help people. That is why she has chosen Biology as her major, with the intent to practice medicine. Her favorite professor at Haigazian University is Dr. Nadim Hassoun, who serves as Pre-Med advisor. She is amazed at his experience, knowledge and perspective.

Alik expresses enormous gratitude for the FALF Scholarship as "simply AMAZING!" She realizes that with the scholarship, new doors have appeared and her future intentions have a chance for being realized. She could have easily received a Merit-based Scholarship or a Scholarship for Syrian students. But FALF has extra meaning in the word "Leadership." Supporters of FALF can be rest assured that their investment in students like Alik and the 7 other recipients is a strong investment for the future.



The Needs are Great ... But Our Faith is Strong

Every gift, no matter how large or small, has a direct impact on our projects and programs. That is why our donors deserve more than just thanks. You deserve the satisfaction and peace of mind that comes with knowing your gifts are being used exactly as you intended and that your generosity is helping to make a significant impact around the world. As a part of celebrating the Centennial Capital Campaign, Faithful to Our Legacy, Embracing the Future, the AMAA has established several recognition societies to help connect our donors with each other. The listing below reflects all outright contributions and pledges designated for a project within the list of Centennial Campaign priorities, beginning with all proceeds from the October 8, 2016 Kickoff Celebration in LA, individual meetings and receptions held in different locations in the U.S. A total of \$4,880,000 has been committed at production time of this issue.

We welcome the opportunity to meet and garner additional support for this historic Campaign. Stay updated and connected and visit www.amaa.org!

1918 Society (\$1,000,000+)

Anonymous
Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian

Founders Society (\$500,000 - \$999,999)

Conte Foundation
Stephen Philibosian Foundation

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Babikian Revocable Living Trust

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Heritage Club (\$25,000 - \$99,999)

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Anonymous
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Mrs. Carlotta Bedrosian
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Bryan & Valina Agbabian Foundation
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Mr. Vasken & Dr. Berjouhi Aivazian
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Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Zurnacian

AMA-Australia Commemorates 10th Anniversary of the Assassination of Hrant Dink



This year marks the 10th anniversary of the assassination of journalist and human rights activist Hrant Dink. In honour of the memory of our national hero, the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia (AMA-Australia) invited his widow Mrs. Rakel Dink to Australia to commemorate with them his life and work, and to also highlight the work of the Hrant Dink Foundation, which carries on his legacy.

On Saturday, March 11, Mrs. Dink was welcomed to Sydney by the AMA-Australia Board of Directors at an informal gathering at the home of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Krikor Youmshajekian.

On Sunday, March 12, Mrs. Dink attended the AMAA Sunday Service held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sydney. During the service, she witnessed her faith in Christ, even during the very difficult times following her husband's death. All were encouraged by her dependence on God, and her trust in His purpose even when we cannot understand why. Rev. Dr. Youmshajekian, President/Executive Director of AMA-Australia, preached from God's word.

Following the AMAA Sunday service, the Annual AMAA Luncheon was held at Miramare Gardens. The guest of honour Mrs. Dink encouraged all in attendance with her heartfelt remarks. The guests were entertained with two poetry recitals from Barouyr Sevag performed by George Shissoyan and a violin solo 'Dele Yaman' performed by Garen Boymoushakian. A brief presentation was given highlighting the work of the AMAA in general as well as the projects completed by AMA-Australia between April 2016 and March 2017.

The surprise of the day was an arranged 'Graduation Ceremony' and presentation of a certificate to Makrouhie Kortian. Mrs. Kortian, an active member in the Australian Armenian Community for many years, was awarded with a Certificate from Haigazian University for completing the two-year Armenian Evangelical Teacher Training Program in 1954 that was offered from 1952-1955 prior to the establishment of Haigazian University. It is never too late for dreams to come true. The event was enjoyed by all who attended.

While in Sydney, Mrs. Dink also visited both Armenian schools – AGBU Alexander School and Hamazkaine Galstaun College. She also visited the AGBU & Tarkmanchats Armenian Saturday schools to encourage and inspire the Armenian youth.

On Sunday, March 19, the Hrant Dink Commemoration Evening was held at the Chatswood Concourse Theatre. The event

was organized jointly with the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANCA). The memory of Hrant Dink was honored through music, poetry and dance. Mrs. Dink delivered the keynote address emphasizing that we should continue to struggle for truth and freedom of speech while acknowledging that nothing is possible without dependence on the Lord who is our Shepherd and our Refuge. The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly General Secretary Colleen Geyer delivered the closing remarks and Rev. Dr. Youmshajekian closed the evening with a prayer and invited the guests to join him in singing the Lord's Prayer.

The following day, Mrs. Dink visited the Armenian community in Melbourne where the life and work of Hrant Dink was again commemorated at a gathering which was well attended and organized by the Sahagian Club. She also detailed the continuing work of the Hrant Dink Foundation which was established in 2007 to carry on Hrant's dreams, his struggle, his language and his heart.

On Thursday, March 23, a farewell dinner was held for Mrs. Dink at the Kirribilli Club which was attended by the AMA-Australia Board and members of ANCA.

AMA-Australia praises the Lord for His many blessings, and thanks Mrs. Dink for accepting their invitation to join them in commemorating the life of her late husband. Special thanks also to ANCA for their support and help in organizing the Hrant Dink Commemoration Evening. □



AMA-Australia Board members pictured with Rakel Dink. L to R: Apraham Ishkhanian, Asdghig Manougian, Lena Bomoushakian, Rakel Dink, Sosi Paproumian, Mark Cholakyan, Avo Soghomonian and Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian.

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits The Armenian Evangelical Community of Toronto

At the invitation of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, visited the Armenian Evangelical Community of Toronto March 17-20 and had three busy days filled with meetings and activities organized by the Church.

On Friday evening, the Church organized a special event dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink. Church member Hagop Anserlian gave the opening remarks which were followed by a Musical Program presented by violinist Daniel Temnick who offered two pieces by Johan Sebastian Bach – Violin Sonata #1 Siciliano and Presto and Nicolo Paganini–Caprice #10.

Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church, introduced Mr. Khanjian who spoke about Hrant Dink and Camp Armen - The Roots of Dink's Struggle. After Mezzo-Soprano Sona Hovsepyan's musical offering of *Groung* and *Paree Arakeel*, the Program ended with the Benediction offered by Rev. Megerditchian. Refreshments followed the lecture in the Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian Fellowship Hall of the Church where the guests had an opportunity to greet Mr. Khanjian.

On Saturday morning, Mr. Khanjian met with the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada's Board in the Levon Fermanian Library of the Church. The Montreal members of AMAC joined the meeting via Skype.

On Saturday evening, the Church's Missions Committee organized a fundraising Mission Banquet which took place at Lara's Restaurant with 150 guests. Mihran Jizmejian, AMAC President, gave the opening remarks and violinist Jonathan Garabedian offered three pieces by Aram Khachadourian. Rev. Megerditchian introduced Keynote Speaker Mr. Khanjian who, with the aid of a video presentation, discussed AMAA's mission worldwide, especially in Armenia. The Banquet ended with Rev. Megerditchian's closing remarks and Benediction.

The Sunday morning Worship Service was held with more than 250 in attendance. The theme of Mr. Khanjian's sermon was "You are the Light of the World." With a video presentation Mr. Khanjian also spoke about the ministry of the AMAA. The Sunday School of the Church also participated in the Worship Service by singing two hymns. On behalf of the Church, Rev. Megerditchian thanked Mr. Khanjian for his visit and presented him with a torch thanking him and the AMAA for their dedicated ministry to the Armenian communities worldwide.

During the Social Hour, Mr. Khanjian had an opportunity to meet with the congregation and the newcomers from Aleppo, Syria in the Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian Fellowship Hall.

It was a blessed weekend not only for the Armenian Evangelical Church, but also for the whole Armenian Community of Toronto. Those in attendance were very touched by the detailed presentations of the AMAA ministries. □



L to R: Andy Loussarian, Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Zaven Khanjian, Abraham Adourian and Sarkis Marandjian.



Mission Banquet of the Toronto Church.



Sunday School children of the Toronto Church.

AMAA Sunday at the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale



Council Members and Trustees L to R: Robert Babken Alajajyan, Rev. Dikran Shanlian, Sarkis Ekimyan, Phillip Merzian, David Aynejian, Luiza Aynejian, Anait Tiratsuyan, Armine Kzlyan Hovanesyan and Sevag Shanlian.

On Sunday March 5, the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale, CA observed AMAA Sunday which was attended by David Aynejian, AMAA's Finance Director, and his wife Luiza. During the service, Mr. Aynejian gave a thorough visual presentation of the ongoing work of the AMAA within churches and schools in Armenia and around the world. After the Worship Service, everyone gathered in the fellowship hall for refreshments and extended time of meeting and discussion with Mr. Aynejian. □

Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church Hosts AMAA Sunday Service and Luncheon



Peter Kougasian, Esq. (front row second from left) and Harout Nercessian (front row third from left) pictured with members of the Pasadena Church.

The Missions and Outreach Committee of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, CA organized its AMAA Sunday Luncheon on March 5 and was attended by 60 members. Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia, and Peter Kougasian, former AMAA Board Member and Vice President, attended the Worship Service and Luncheon. Mr. Nercessian delivered the English sermon during the Church Service. At the Luncheon in Derian Fellowship Hall, Mr. Nercessian also presented a video showing AMAA sponsored projects around the world. The congregation raised \$800.00 to help support the many programs of the AMAA. □

AMAA Sunday at Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Church in Glendale

On March 5, Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), visited Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Church in Glendale, CA to partake in AMAA Sunday. He was accompanied by his wife, Sona, his son and two grandchildren.

During the Worship Service, Mr. Khanjian preached on James 2: 14-17, 26, stressing the importance of preaching the Gospel and caring for those in need, as the fruit of true faith. In his message, he referred to many passages from the book of Acts of the Apostles to elaborate how faith and work go together hand in hand. This has been the goal of the AMAA from its inception in 1918 and continues to be to this date.

After his message, Mr. Khanjian gave a report on the activities and services of the AMAA around the world and its plans for the AMAA's Centennial celebration. Mr. Khanjian's message and report were highly appreciated by the Church members and ICFN viewers



in Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena and other surrounding cities, who could watch it a week later on their TVs. □

AMAA Missions Luncheon Held at UACC

By Virginia Abajian, Chair, UACC Missions Committee

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations ..." Matt. 28:19

On March 5, approximately 140 United Armenian Congregational Church worship attendees in Los Angeles had the opportunity to learn just how wide and diverse the work of the AMAA is in today's world.

Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), gave a short overview of the AMAA's work and challenges during the worship service, and Levon Filian, West Coast AMAA Executive Director, followed up at a luncheon after the service. Using a power point presentation, Mr. Filian touched on the countries served by the AMAA as well



UACC Missions Luncheon.



L to R: Rev. & Mrs. Ron and Renee Tovmassian, Virginia Abajian, Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian and Dr. Liliana and Levon Filian.

as the diverse programs such as aid to churches, schools, relief aid, camps and scholarships. He chose four individuals who have been helped by the different programs as examples of how donations impact people directly. One example was of two students who received scholarship monies and went on to become ministers. Another example was of an orphan whose life was given direction through the help she received from the AMAA. This young woman was present at the luncheon.

In closing, Mr. Filian made the analogy that one flower does not make a garden, but planting one flower at a time results in a garden. The AMAA impacts the lives of many, one by one, thereby impacting the world. Our donations make it possible for the AMAA to continue its mission of "planting flowers" one by one. □

Chicago Church Hosts AMAA Sunday

On Sunday, April 23, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago hosted an AMAA Sunday. During the Worship Service, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, delivered the Armenian sermon.

Following the service, David Aynejian, AMAA Finance Director, gave a presentation on AMAA's many activities throughout the world.

The AMAA has a strong connection to the Chicago church which has been the home church to many AMAA Board members over the years. Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, current AMAA President, attended the Armenian Evangelical Church.

The AMAA would like to thank Pastor Rev. Jeremy Tovmassian and members of the Church for their hospitality and for the opportunity to meet with the faithful in Chicago. □



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago.



David Aynejian gives a presentation on AMAA.

AMAA Sundays Observed at the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Montreal

Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, preached during services on March 12 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal in Laval and on March 19 at the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal.

Following each service, Mr. Nercessian made a presentation where he talked about the work of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada and the important work that is being done to support the needy in Armenia and Artsakh. He also spoke about the Syrian Armenian refugees in Armenia, the town of Askeran where the AMAA/AMAC support Kindergartens, Christian Education Centers that have been renovated and about the Shogh Centers in Armenia and Artsakh and the children who are served in these centers. Mr.



Harout Nercessian (delivering the message) and Rev. Hovhannes Svadjian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Laval.



Rev. Georges Dabbo, Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal.

Nercessian challenged the congregation to consider investing their resources on things that have eternal value.

During the two Sunday worship services, members of the congregations pledged to support over 35 children in the AMAA Child Sponsorship Program.

Special thanks to Rev. Hovhannes Sevadjan, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church, and to Rev. Georges Dabbo, Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church, as well as to Jack Kafesjian, Treasurer of AMAC and member of the FAEC, for their support and encouragement. □

AMAA Congratulates Mary A. Papazian, Ph.D. 30th President of San Jose State University

The Armenian Missionary Association of America extends its sincerest congratulations to Dr. Mary A. Papazian, who was inaugurated as President of San Jose State University (SJSU) on Thursday, May 4, 2017.

Dr. Papazian joined SJSU on July 1, 2016 as its 30th President. She has 30 years of experience as a university professor as well as an academic and administrative leader. Before joining SJSU, Dr. Papazian was President of Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven CT, and prior to that was the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs of Lehman College of the City University of New York. She has also served as the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Montclair State University in Montclair, NJ and as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Oakland University in Rochester, MI.

Dr. Papazian holds bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in English from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is married to Dr. Dennis R. Papazian, founding Director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, MI. They have two daughters, Ani and Marie. Dr. Papazian attended



United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles as a youth. She is the niece of Ron Altoon, the husband of Judge Alice Altoon, AMAA Board Member. □



Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow Celebrates 15th Anniversary

On May 7, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow celebrated its 15th jubilee Anniversary. In addition to Church members, many guests from different regions of Russia participated in the special Anniversary Worship Service. The Church Choir presented a beautiful Anniversary Concert praising the Lord for His many blessings.

The Worship Service was led by Church Pastor Rev. Masis Hakobyan. Rev. Hakobyan spoke about how God called him to pastoral service and how the Church founders started this church and its mission preaching the Gospel to the Armenian Community in Moscow.

The Sunday School children presented special songs and poems praising God and bringing joy to all those who were present at this festive service.

Rev. Dr. René Leonian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia, shared the Word of God and congratulated the Church on this anniversary. He said, “The truth is that we are the Light of the World and in this world we have a special function that we need to perform.”

A reception followed the Worship Service where guests had time for fellowship with each other and to receive special Anniversary souvenirs prepared by the Church.

May God continue to bless the mission of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow to continue their unique service of implementing the great commission of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the Gospel. □



Sunday School students of Moscow Church.



Rev. Masis Hakobyan and the choir of the Moscow Church.



L to R: Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Rev. Masis Hakobyan, Garbis Topjyan and Arman Badalyan.



Syria Update



The Armenian Evangelical Church and Summer Camp KCHAG in Kessab

It's a great joy and inspiration to see the renovation of the Armenian Evangelical Holy Trinity Church in Kessab! It was ransacked, burnt and destroyed at the time of the invasion in 2014. At that time it was hard to believe that Kessab would ever revive again. But God has once more been merciful to us and the work of evil has been defeated.

Even though the Summer Camp KCHAG in Kessab is in need of a lot of repair we rejoice to see it in this shape after Pastor Jirair Ghazarian, minister of the Church, together with Church members cleaned it up. Soon the repairs that



The sanctuary of Kessab Church under renovation.



Camp KCHAG in Kessab, Syria.

are needed will be finalized and a Family Retreat for the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria after six years of interruption will be held once again. Please pray for KCHAG that it will again be a place where young people find the Lord Jesus Christ and people are renewed in their devotion to our Lord. □

Pastor Vazrik Safarian's Ordination in Tehran, Iran

On Thursday, April 6, 2017, Vazrik Safarian was ordained at the Armenian Evangelical Sourp Hovhannes Church of Tehran, Iran. The Sanctuary was filled to capacity with members and friends of the area Armenian Evangelical Churches, including clergy and representatives from sister Armenian and local churches.

The ordination service was presided over by Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE). Also participating were Rev. Sergei Shavertian, Pastor of Sourp Hovhannes Church, Rev. Michel Aghamalian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Shnorhali Church of Tehran, and Rev. Selim Sabounji, Pastor of the Assyrian Evangelical Church of Beirut, Lebanon and Administrator of the UAECNE Headquarters.

A reception followed the service, where guests had an opportunity to congratulate the new Assistant Pastor.

Rev. Safarian, a native of Tehran, has been serving the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Tehran as Sunday School teacher, youth leader and preacher since 1995 while taking theological courses offered by the Evangelical Churches of Iran from 1995-1999. He has also participated in various theological and training seminars. Currently he is the Pastor of Emmanuel and St. Peter Evangelical Churches in Tehran, Iran. □



The Ordination Service of Rev. Vazrik Safarian. Participants in the service L to R:
Rev. Selim Sabounji, Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, Rev. Sergei Shavertian and Rev. Michel Aghamalian

Armenian Evangelical Boarding School of Anjar Celebrates 70th Anniversary

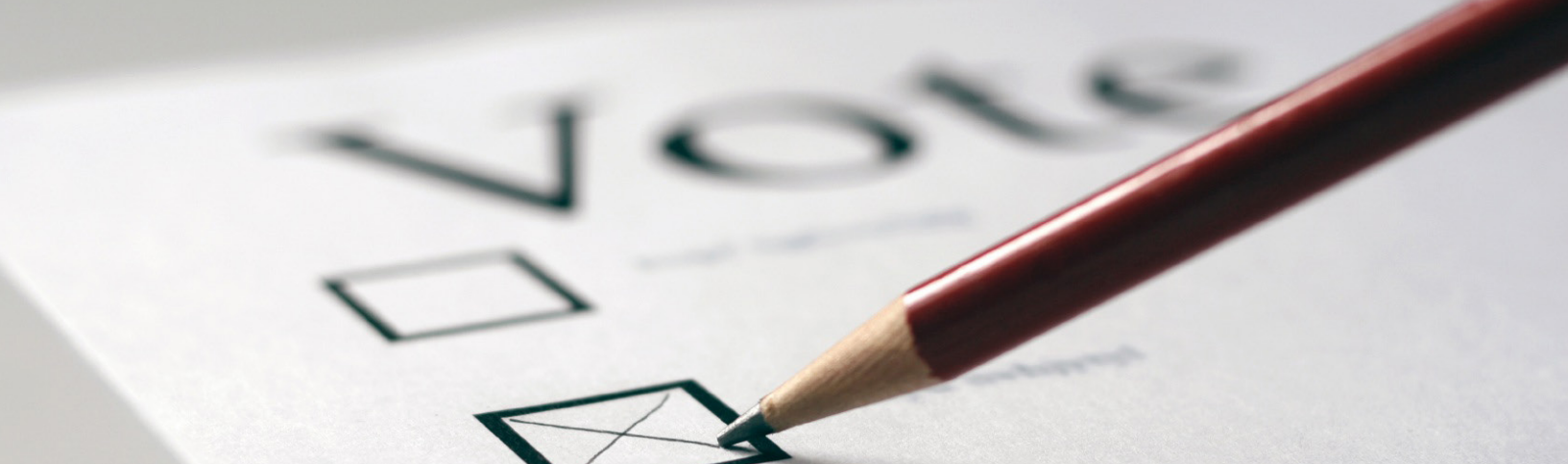
On Saturday, May 20, the Armenian Evangelical Boarding School of Anjar, Lebanon celebrated its 70th Anniversary with the presence of one of its former missionaries Sister Hanna Christenn, who is celebrating her 80th birthday this year.

Sister Hanna, after retiring from her missionary services in the Middle East, volunteered to go to Armenia as AMAA's missionary, where she served selflessly until recent years, serving the young and the old and setting up soup kitchens in the border villages of Armenia. □



Sister Hanna Christenn.





Voting Eligibility Requirements to Elect New AMAA Board of Directors Members As of Current Fiscal Year

At the March 4, 2017 Armenian Missionary Association of America's Board of Directors Meeting, a resolution was passed to change the voting eligibility requirements to elect new AMAA Board of Directors members. The changes were effective immediately for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Any donor making a cumulative gift of \$25 or more, received at the AMAA between August 1, 2016 – July 1, 2017, will be eligible to receive a ballot.

Lifetime membership criteria has also changed from a one-time donation of \$1,000 or more to a cumulative gift history of \$10,000. (Previous Life Members will retain status quo and will continue receiving a ballot).

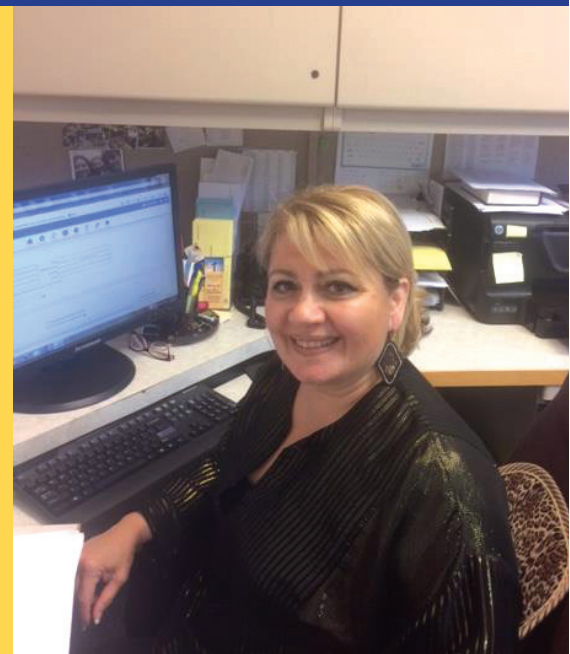
Meet Our Staff at AMAA

Salpi Ghougasian, Sponsorship/Scholarship Department, Administrative Assistant

Since 2009, Salpi Ghougasian has been with the Armenian Missionary Association of America as Administrative Assistant in the Sponsorship/Scholarship Department. She assists the Department's Manager in many aspects and handles correspondence for the AMAA's Child Sponsorship Program and the annual Scholarship Program. She also cheerfully answers the phone at the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ and enjoys her daily work with her colleagues.

Salpi was born in Aleppo, Syria and moved to the United States when she was 19. She is married to Asadour Ghougasian, who works in the jewelry business, and together they have three daughters, Narine, who is married to Vatche Kevorkian, Lara and Sela. She is a long-time resident of Emerson, NJ and with her family attends the Armenian Bible Church.

She is very active in her church and has been teaching Ladies Bible Study for several years and involved in adult/youth group ministries for almost 10 years. Salpi loves God's word and has enjoyed teaching it. Her favorite Bible verse is "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)



Օտար Երկրի Մէջ Զոհի Սեղաններ

(Ծննդ. 12. 1-9)

Վեր. Վաչէ Էքմէքճեան*

Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ ծննդեան 171րդ Ամեակի շուրջ մտորումներս կը կեդրոնանան Հին Կտակարանի Ծննդոց գիրքին մէջ Աբրամի (ետքը՝ Աբրահամ) կառուցած զոհի սեղաններուն եւ անկէ եկած պատգամին շուրջ:

Աբրամ Աստուծմէ պատուէր կը ստանայ որ ինքն ու իր ընտանիքը Խառանէն ելլեն ու դէպի Քանան երթան: Ան 75 տարեկան էր երբ այս պատուէրը ստացաւ: 75 տարեկան մարդ մը ալ կը մտածէ հանգստեան կոչուելու, հաստատուելու եւ իր կեանքի աշունը ապահով միջավայրի մը մէջ անցընելու մասին եւ ո՛չ թէ տեղափոխուելու: Աբրամ փոխանակ Աստուծմէ հեշտ կեանք մը խնդրելու, կ'անայ Անոր ձայնին, կը թողու իր հանգիստ երկիրը ու կը հասնի Քանան: Այն երկիրը դատարկ չէր, հոն կային Քանանացիներ, որոնք ունէին իրենց կրօնական յատուկ մշակոյթը: Անոնց կրօնը հիմնականօրէն կեդրոնացած էր ջրառողգման համոզումներու շուրջ (ինչպէս պարագան էր միջին արեւելեան հնադարեան շատ մը կրօններու): Անոնց պաշտամունքի առարկան էր Բահալ-Աստարովդ աստուածները: Անոնք բարձր տեղերու մէջ գտնուած սեղաններով կը մատուցանէին զոհեր, որպէսզի աշնան եւ գարնան աստուածները ուղղարկեն պէտք եղած անձրեւները:

Հիմա Աբրամ ինքզինք կը գտնէ անոնց մէջ: Անոր շրջապատը օտար էր թէ՛ աշխարհագրականօրէն եւ թէ՛ կրօնական ու բարոյական համոզումներով: Սակայն Աստուծոյ խօսքը կը յիշէ հետաքրքրական մանրամասնութիւն մը. Աբրամ Քանանու երկիրը հասնելով առաջին տեղ Տէրոջ համար կը շինէ սեղան մը (Ծն. 12.7): Պահ մը երեւակայեմք, առաւօտ Քանանացիներ կ'աղթան ու կը գտնեն նոր սեղան մը, բայց մէկ տարբերութիւնով՝ նոյրուած երկինքի եւ երկրի արարիչ միակ Աստուծոյն: Աբրամի հաւատքը ուրիշ էր: Անոր սեղանը խնդրանքի սեղան չէր որքան որ յոյսի եւ ուխտի նշան մը, որ իր սերունդներով պիտի օրհնուին երկրի բոլոր ժողովուրդները: Օտար երկրի մէջ ու անոր կրօնական ու բարոյական սպառնալիքներու դիմաց, անոր սեղանը կը դառնայ հոգեւոր սպա-

ռազինութիւն եւ Աստուածապաշտութեան յենարան:

Աստուած հաւատարիմ կը մնայ իր խոստումին: Աբրամի տրուած խոստումը կը նորոգուի հազարաւոր տարիներ ետք, երբ Աստուծոյ որդին՝ Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոս կու գայ եւ Աստուծոյ «Զոհի Սեղան»ը կը շինէ դարձեալ օտար երկրի մը մէջ՝ Հռովմէացիներու կողմէ ոճրագործներու տրամադրուած բլուրի մը վրայ, «որպէսզի ամէն ով որ անոր հաւատայ, չկորսուի հապա յաւիտեանական կեանք ունենայ» (Յովհ. 3.16): Այժմ Քրիստոս է մեր «Զոհի Սեղան»ը ու մեր հոգեւոր սպառնալիքները:

Որպէս Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի եւ անոր հաւատարիմ զաւակները, ըլլալով Քրիստոսի մարմնին անբաժան մէկ մասնիկը, մեր կեանքի գոյութիւնը եւ իմաստը գտած ենք Քրիստոսի անձին եւ անոր շնորհած փրկութեան փորձառութեան մէջ: Կ'ապրինք ներկան յաւիտեանականութեան արժէքներով ու մեր հոգեւոր ուղղութիւնը կը գտնենք «Զոհի Սեղաններ»ու մօտ: 171 տարուան մեր բեղուն պատմութեան ընթացքին, սկսած պատմական մեր հողերէն ու հասնելով մինչեւ Միջին Արեւելք ու աշխարհացրի ամէնուրեք, ամէն մէկ քայլափոխի, տեղահանութեան, աքսորի եւ կամ վերահաստատման ու հետեւաբար «օտար երկրի» մէջ գտնուելով՝ մեզ կանչող եւ առաջնորդող Աստուծոյ վրայ ունեցած մեր հաւատքը, յոյսը եւ համոզումը մեզ մղած է «Զոհի Սեղաններ» կառուցելու ու Աստուածապաշտութեան խորանը վառ պահելու:

Այսօր՝ Հայ Աւետարանական իրականութեան մէջ եկեղեցիներ, Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութիւններ, Հայկազեան Համալսարան, կրթական հաստատութիւններ կը շարունակեն մնալ «Զոհի Սեղաններ»ը, մեզի շնորհելու հոգեւոր ուղղութիւն, Աւետարանի լոյսով սերունդներ կերտելու հիմնաքար եւ անոնց փոխանցելու սոյն «Սեղաններ»ը աննկուն պահելու մարտահրաւեր: □

* Վեր. Վաչէ Էքմէքճեան հովին Է Էմմանուէլ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի, Տաունի, Զալիֆորնիա



Տարեգրութիւն Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել Վարժարանի Յուշամատենի Շնորհանդէս

Հաբաթ, 18 Մարտ 2017-ի երեկոյեան ժամը 7:00-ին Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել Վարժարանի «Ահարոն Շիրաճեան» սրահէն ներս տեղի ունեցաւ Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետարանական Կրթական Խորհուրդին հրատարակած «Տարեգրութիւն Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել Վարժարանի» յուշամատենին շնորհանդէսը՝ հոծ բազմութեան ներկայութեան:

Ծաւալուն, վաւերագրական եւ լուսանկարներով հարուստ գեղատիպ այս հատորը, խմբագրութեամբ Յակոբ Չոլաքեանի, նուիրուած էր Հայոց Տեղասպանութեան 100-ամեակին:

Շնորհանդէսի հանդիսավար Լուսին Ապաճեան-Չիլ Աբօշեան անդրադառնալով հատորի հրատարակութեան նախապատրաստական աշխատանքներուն ըսաւ, որ հաւաքուած ենք տարիներ առաջ տեսիլքի մը ուղեւորութեամբ սկիզբ առած ծրագրի իրականացումին առթած ուրախութիւնը ապրելու: Ապա Նշեց թէ, «Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետարանական Համայնքի Համայնքապետ Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեան մօտաւորապէս քառորդ դար դպրոցի պատմութեան հետ աղերսուելով ամէն ջանք ի գործ դրաւ նպաստելու վարժարանի հանգրուանային ընդլայնումին՝ նախակրթարանէն միջնակարգ ապա երկրորդական: Սոյն գաղափարը Համայնքային ժողովին կողմէ ջերմապէս ողջունուելէ եւ ընդունուելէ ետք, սկիզբ առին այժմու դպրոցաշէնքին վրայ յարկաբաժին կառուցելու շինարարական աշխատանքները: Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել երկրորդական վարժարանը տարիներ շարունակ իր կրթական ծրագիրներով, արդիական շունչով եւ քրիստոնէական հաւատքով սպառնալից հայ աշակերտը, որպէսզի ան ջահակիրը դառնայ իրեն վստահուած հարուստ աւանդին»:

Նորատիպ հատորը ինքնատիպ ոճով ներկայացուց գրող, կրթական մշակ, հայագիտական հիմնարկի դասախօս Լեւոն Շառոյեան, որ հանգամանօրէն անդրադարձաւ գիրքի բովանդակութեան, որուն ընդմէջէն՝ Բեթել վարժարանի հիմնադրութեան յետ-ցեղասպանութեան շրջանէն մինչեւ ներկայ ժամանակները, անոր առաքելութեան, շրջանաւարտ սերունդներուն, տնօրէններուն: Վերառնելով վարժարանին դերը հալէպահայ կեանքէն ներս, Շառոյեան Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել երկրորդական վարժարանը համարեց լուսաւոր կէտ մը հայ համայնքի

կեանքէն ներս՝ մաղթելով որ ան միշտ շողայ եւ պայծառացնէ նորահաս սերունդներուն միտքն ու հոգին:

Գեղարուեստական յայտագրէն վերջ պաստառի վրայ ներկայացուցեցան վարժարանի հայերէնաւանդ ուսուցչուհիներ Տիրուհի Մարգարեան-Կարապետեանի եւ Թիթառ Չորպաճեան-Պալիոզեանի կողմէ հեռակայ դրութեամբ արտասանուած շնորհաւորական խօսքերը:

Աւարտին խօսք առաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Համայնքի Համայնքապետ Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեան, որ նախ շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց Լեւոն Շառոյեանին՝ գիրքի համապարփակ ներկայացումին համար, ինչպէս նաեւ յուշամատենի յանձնախումբի բոլոր անդամներուն, նշելով որ գիրքը լոյսին եկաւ հաւաքական բժախնդիր աշխատանքի շնորհիւ, իսկ յանձնախումբի անդամները մէկ առ մէկ այցելեցին համայնքի այն զաւակներուն տուները, որոնք տեղեկութիւններ, լուսանկարներ կամ որեւէ վաւերագրական փաստաթուղթ ունէին վարժարանին առնչուող, որպէսզի հրատարակութիւնը ամբողջական ըլլայ: Վերապատուելին եզրափակելով նախ իր երախտագիտութիւնը յայտնեց Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան գործադիր տնօրէն Զաւէն Խանճեանին՝ իր նիւթաբարոյ-



յական աջակցութեան եւ քաջալերանքին համար, ապա մեջբերեց Հայկազեան համալսարանի Հայկական Սփիւռքի Ուսումնասիրութեան կեդրոնի Դոկտ. Անդրանիկ Տազեսեանի նորատիպ յուշամատենին առիթով գրած հետեւեալ վկայութիւնը. «Վաւերատեղեկագրական բնոյթի ուշագրաւ, բժախնդիր եւ երախտաշատ հետազօտութիւն մը, որ սկզբնաղբիւր կը հանդիսանայ Միջին Արեւելքի եւ ընդհանրապէս Սփիւռքի հայ դպրոցին պատմահայեցողական վերլուծութեան»:

Այնուհետեւ Վերապատուելին հրաւիրեց ՀՀ Հալէպի գլխաւոր հիւպատոսը, Սուրիոյ խորհրդարանի երեսփոխանը, սուրիահայ կազմակերպութիւններու ներկայացուցիչները, Լեւոն Շառոյեանն ու վարժարանի տնօրէնուհի Պէթի Գրաճեանը՝ միասնաբար կատարելու աւանդական զինեծօսի արարողութիւնը:

Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետարանական Համայնքի Համայնքապետ Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեանի աղօթքով շնորհանդէսը իր աւարտին հասաւ:

Գանձասար Շաբաթաթերթ - Հալէպ

ԱՊՐԻԼ Ե ԿՐԿԻՆ

Ապրիլ է կրկին:

Ապրիլ:

Ստեղծագործին հրաշալիքը:

Գոյութեան գերագոյն նուէրը մարդ արարածին:

Շունչ, ձէլ, կազմ, էութիւն եւ.....կեանք:

Աստուած ստեղծեց մարդը եւ անոր իշխանութեան տակ դրաւ բնութիւնն ու անոր մէջ գտնուող ամէն ինչ:

Երկիրն ու անոր վրայ գտնուող շարժուն կամ անշարժ ամէն էութիւն:

Ծովն ու անոր մէջ ապրող ամէն բոյս եւ անասուն:

Ապրիլ է կրկին:

Արդար է որ հայ մարդն ալ անսահման վայելքը ունենար ըմբռնելու այն ինչ որ Ստեղծիչը պարգեւեց բոլորին:

Եւ գուցէ այդ վայելքը՝ Աստուածային արդարութեան անհաւասար կշիռով, ճշմարիտ է բոլորին համար:

Բացի հայուն համապարփակ միտքէն:

Բացի հայուն հաւաքական յիշողութենէն:

Բացի հայուն իմացական ենթագիտակցութենէն:

Ուր կապարէ ծանրութեամբ մութ ապրումներ ծովամոյն կ'ընեն հայ անհատը:

Ապրիլեան սեւ «անապրիլ» օրուայ մը յիշատակը:

Կեանքի ինչ հեզնայնք:

Բնութեան շողշողոն ու օր մը:

Երբ արեւի ճառագայթները կը համբուրեն առաւօտեան ցօղէն լոգանք առած, բնութեան օրհնութիւններով յղի սրբազան հողը:

Երբ արեւի շողերը կը ջերմացնեն մարդ էակի հոգին:

Երբ գարնան կանչին անսալով կը փթթին նորածին կոկոնները:

Երբ անմեղ ու սպիտակ թիթեռնիկներ, ազատ կը ճախրեն ամէնուրեք:

Վերջ պիտի գտնէ՞մտքի այս լլկումը:

Վերջ պիտի գտնէ՞ ապրումներու այս խաչելութիւնը:

Անկարելի չէ անշուշտ:

Եւ հարց կու տայ ամէն ոք:

Կարժէ՞ այսպէս շարունակել:

Ե՞րբ պիտի թոթափենք բեռը:

Ե՞րբ պիտի ձերբազատուինք

ինքնապատժումէ:

Ոմանք՝ դիմած են գիտակից մոռացութեան:

Ուրիշներ՝ նիւթի ենթակայութեան:

Մէկ կեանք ունինք ապրելու, բաւ է վատնել

զայն «Գոտոյի սպասումով»

Եւ տակաւին ուրիշներ գոհունակ՝ լուծուած կը համարեն հարցը:

Սակայն՝

Արդարութիւնն անվիճելի եւ անսակարկ՝

յաղթանակի թափնին է մեր ճակատին:

Այսօր, գուցէ առնելիք չունինք:

Ոչ իսկ մեղանչում մը բարի:

Ոչ իսկ համապարփակ ճանաչում եւ

դատապարտութիւն:

Այսօր ակռայ չունինք տակաւին

Ի՞նչ փոյթ,

Ընկրկում չկա՞յ

Նահանջ չկա՞յ

Կը սպասենք.....

Զաւէն Խանճեան

Ապրիլ 24, 2011



AMAA

**SUMMER CAMPS
2017**

Summer



a time when everyone kicks back and looks forward to relaxing, enjoying sun-filled days and participating in fun activities.

The same holds true for our precious children in Armenia as they get ready for their first day at one of the AMAA's sponsored camps in Hankavan, Armenia and Shushi, Artsakh as well as the 46 day camps in surrounding areas.

Each summer, the AMAA provides thousands of our precious children a camp experience where they can escape from their impoverished daily routines for a little while and be exposed to a won-

derful program that fosters self-esteem, builds self-confidence, offers fun and educational activities and most importantly, lets them hear the Word of God.

Through the kindness and generosity of our donors, the AMAA operates two overnight camps, one in Hankavan and one in Shushi, as well as over 40 day camps in other areas of the Homeland. Thanks to the many donations we receive, the children attend the camps free of charge.

Please help us give our children some much needed fun again this summer and support the AMAA Camp Program.

A gift of \$70 will help one child be able to attend an overnight camp for one week.

A gift of \$40 will help a child attend a day camp for one week.

They will never forget your generosity or the positive impact that you will have on their young lives.

On behalf of all of our young AMAA campers, thank you and have a wonderful summer!

YES!

**I will help children
in Armenia & Karabagh
attend summer camps!**

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ for:

_____ Children @ \$70 each for overnight camps _____ Children @ \$40 each for day camps

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make your tax deductible donations to AMAA earmarked for *Armenia Summer Camps* and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.
To make a contribution with a credit/debit card, please call AMAA at 201.265.2607 or visit AMAA's website: **www.amaa.org**

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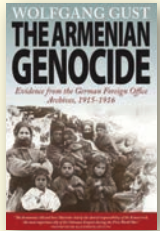
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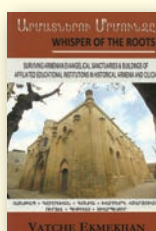
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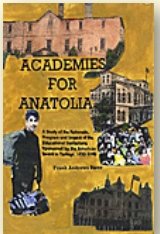
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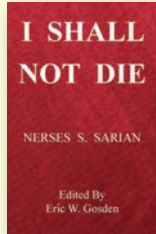
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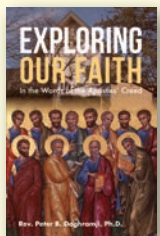
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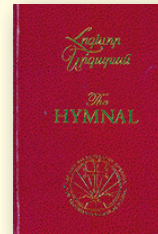
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Received With Thanks Ծնորհակալութեամբ Ստացուած

Յարգելի Տիար Զաւէն Խանճեան,

Հաճոյքով կարդացի «Ուրիշ Ելք Զկայ» խորագրով յօդուածը Հայ Աւետարանչականի այս տարուան առաջին եռամսեային մէջ:

Կը շնորհաւորեմ ձեր առողջ մտածումները թելադրուած Հայաստանի գալիք նոր կառավարութեան՝ ըլլան արդար եւ հաւասար կիրարկումը բոլոր քաղաքացիներուն:

Հոն կ'ըսես՝ Հայրենիքի հողին վրայ գտնուող ամենաթանկագին հարստութիւնը երկրի քաղաքացին է: Ծատ ճիշդ:

Կարդացի նաեւ Հերոս Նահատակ Հրանդ Տիմոքի ելոյթը տրուած Լոս Անճելէսի մէջ՝ 5 Նոյեմբեր 2006-ին, իր կենսագրութիւնը եւ վկայութիւնները: Կ'արժէ պահել վերոյիշեալ երկու թանկագին գրութիւնները ապագայ նոր սերունդին:

Սիրով՝

Լեւոն Մ'երճանեան

Պեմնոթ, Մէսէշուսէց - Ապրիլ 7, 2017

Ara Shiragian

Ara A. Shiragian of Warwick, RI passed away at Scalabrini Villa on March 19, 2017. He was 95.

Ara was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1921 to the Reverend Aharon and Aroosiag Shirajian who ran an orphanage for child survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Ara excelled in math, chemistry and physics and was fluent in English, Armenian, French and Arabic. He attended the American University of Beirut where he earned a degree in Chemistry, after which he, his mother and sister emigrated to the United States.

In the U.S., Ara met Arpie Kaloustian who grew up in Athens, Greece and was studying at Northwestern University. They were married in 1957, moved to Rhode Island, and were blessed with the arrival of daughters Grace and Joy. Meanwhile, Ara earned a Master's degree in Chemistry at Brown University.

Ara was a family man who adored his mother, sisters, wife and daughters. He entertained friends and family with humorous antics, often bursting into song from one of his favorite operas or showing up for Christmas parties as Mrs. Santa Claus.

He was also committed to his community as member of the Board of the Armenian Martyr's Committee which erected a monument to the Armenian Genocide at Providence's North Burial Ground. He served for years as Deacon of the Armenian Congregational Church in Providence and as a Sunday school teacher and youth group leader. He was fondly referred to as "Uncle Ara" by his young charges, some of whom he tutored in chemistry, physics and math.

Ara worked for 39 years at CAL Chemical in Coventry, RI, which provided him with a second family. He retired at age 90 as Alzheimer's began to set in and he eventually joined his mother in heaven.

He leaves behind his wife Arpie, daughters Grace Shiragian of Alexandria, VA and Joy Shiragian of Oakland, CA, grandchildren Alexander Ara Beckner and Charlotte Grace Beckner of Oakland, CA, sister Aranoosh Vivien Yeretsian of Cranston, nieces Rita Marcotte of Cranston and Mary Yakoubian of Hoboken, NJ, and nephews Peter Yeretsian of Cranston and Dan Yakoubian of San Diego, CA.

Funeral services were held on March 25 at the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cranston, followed by burial at Swan Point Cemetery in Providence. Donations may be made in his memory to AMAA's Syria Relief Fund. □



Rev. Mihran Torosyan

In the 80th year of his earthly life, Rev. Mihran Levonovich Torosyan, the oldest clergyman of the Abkhazian Evangelical Brotherhood Church, passed away on January 28, 2017.

Mihran Torosyan was born in Tsebelda, near Sokhumi, on July 1, 1937. In 1890, his grandfather, with his family, fled from Turkey from Armenian Genocide. Abkhazian hospitably received refugees and gave shelter in the village Tsebelda Gulpryphskogo area, which became the native land of Torosyans' family. Mihran attended the Armenian School of the village and during his teenage years learned to love God and to trust Christ for salvation and committed his life to the Lord. He joined the local Armenian Evangelical Church at an early age in the 1960s when several groups of Armenian Evangelicals in Sokhumi got together for prayer meetings and worship services. These groups merged and formed the local Armenian Evangelical congregation. In 1968, he married Keghetsig and they were blessed with a son and a daughter.

Rev. Torosyan became the Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Abkhazia in 1985. Soon after the collapse of the Soviet



Regimes, Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, then the Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), became aware of this church through foreign missionaries. The only need that Pastor Torosyan had asked for from the AMAA at the time was a bicycle for him to do evangelism in numerous Armenian villages in Abkhazia. Rev. Dr. René Leonian, then the Representative of the AMAA in Armenia, personally visited the Church in Abkhazia and delivered the needed funds to purchase Rev. Torosyan's bicycle. Rev. Janbazian continued to contact the church and supported it by sending Bibles and spiritual literature. The AMAA also supported needy families of the area.

Rev. Torosyan was ordained into Christian Ministry in 2001, officiated by Rev. Leonian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia, with the participation of Rev. Sasun Karakhanian from Sochi as well as two other local pastors.

Rev. Torosyan was a dedicated man for his family, his Armenian nation and his church, following the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to preach the Good News to all creatures. He had a big heart, kindness, skills and honesty, enthusiasm and the spiritual insight of a man of God.

He is survived by his wife, Keghetsig, his daughter and son, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. □

The AMAA Board of Directors and the staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

Anna Marie Benlian
Havertown, PA

George Magzarian
Fair Lawn, NJ

* Alice Nahigian
Waltham, MA

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." **Revelation 14:13 (NIV)**

* Memorials designated for AMAA

Back Cover Picture: Inscription on the back of photo

1922/23 during the Armenian Genocide
hundreds of thousands of people were
miserable, homeless, "countryless"
orphans. The French Christian
charitable organization Action
Chrétienne distributed clothing
and built a center.



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Armenian refugees in front of a camp waiting for aid - Aleppo, Syria, 1922
(From AMAA Archives: See inscription on the back of this photo on page 39)